THE ART OF MIYAZAKI'S SPIRITED AWAY

ジブリ THE ART シリーズ

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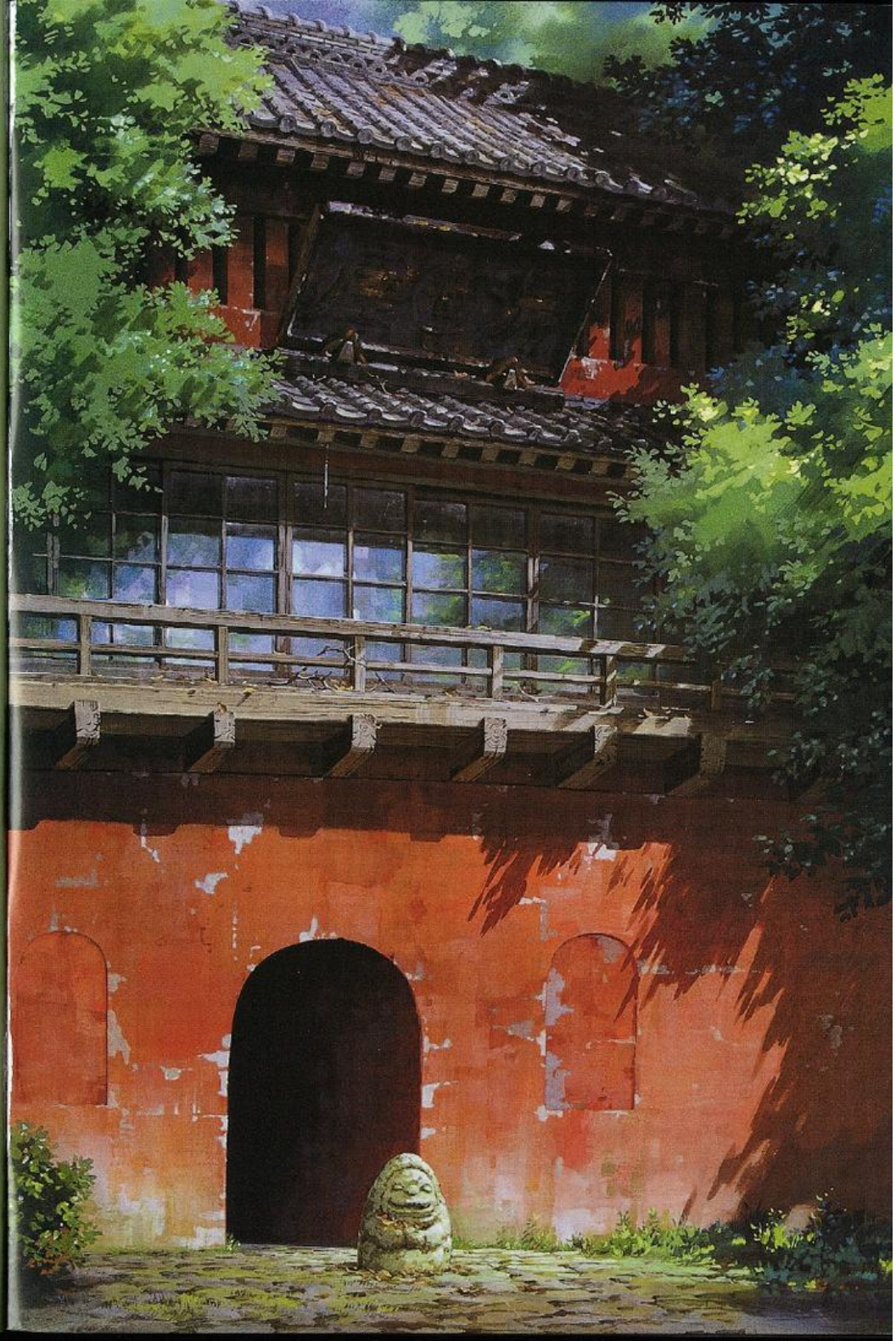

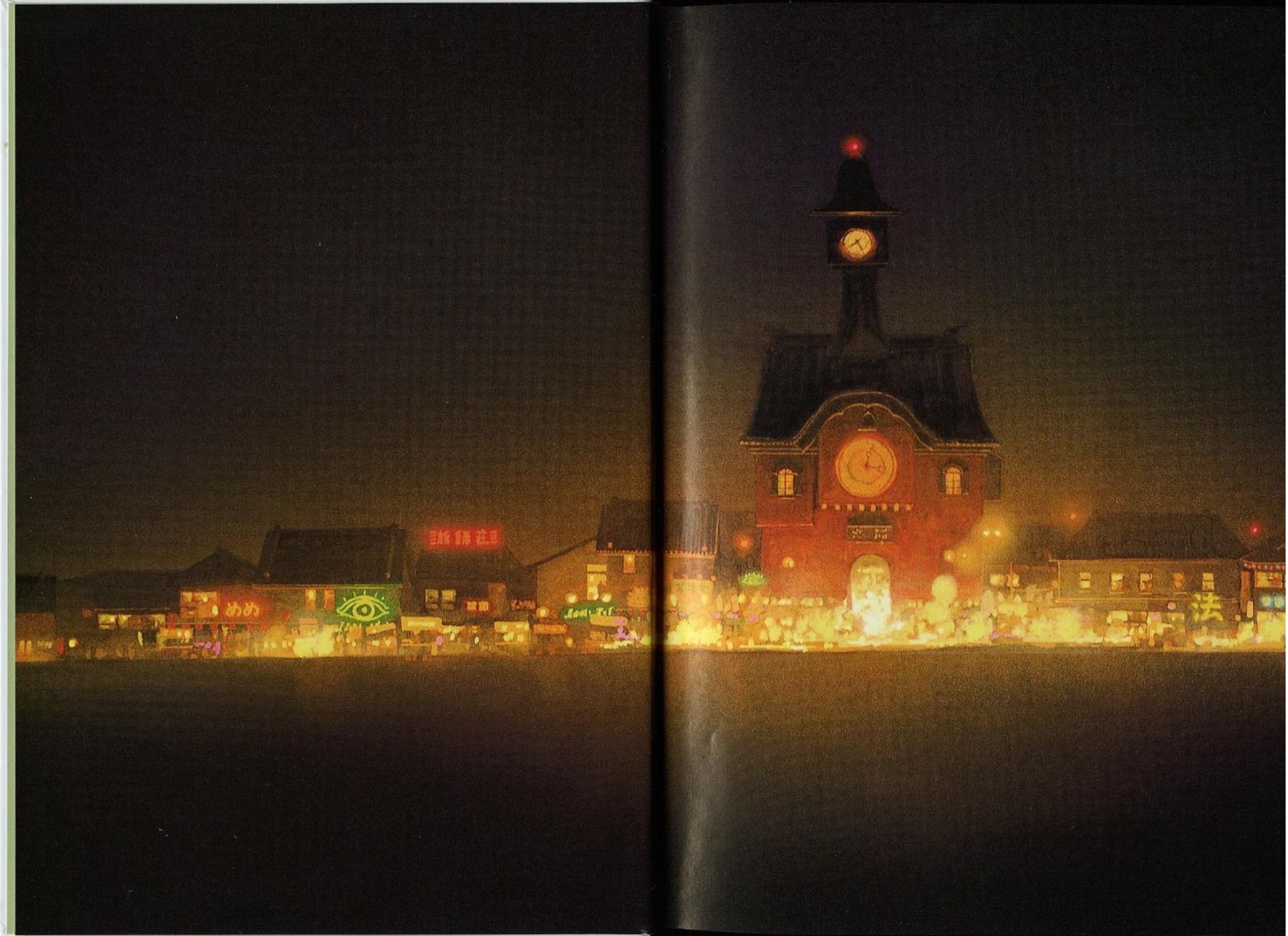
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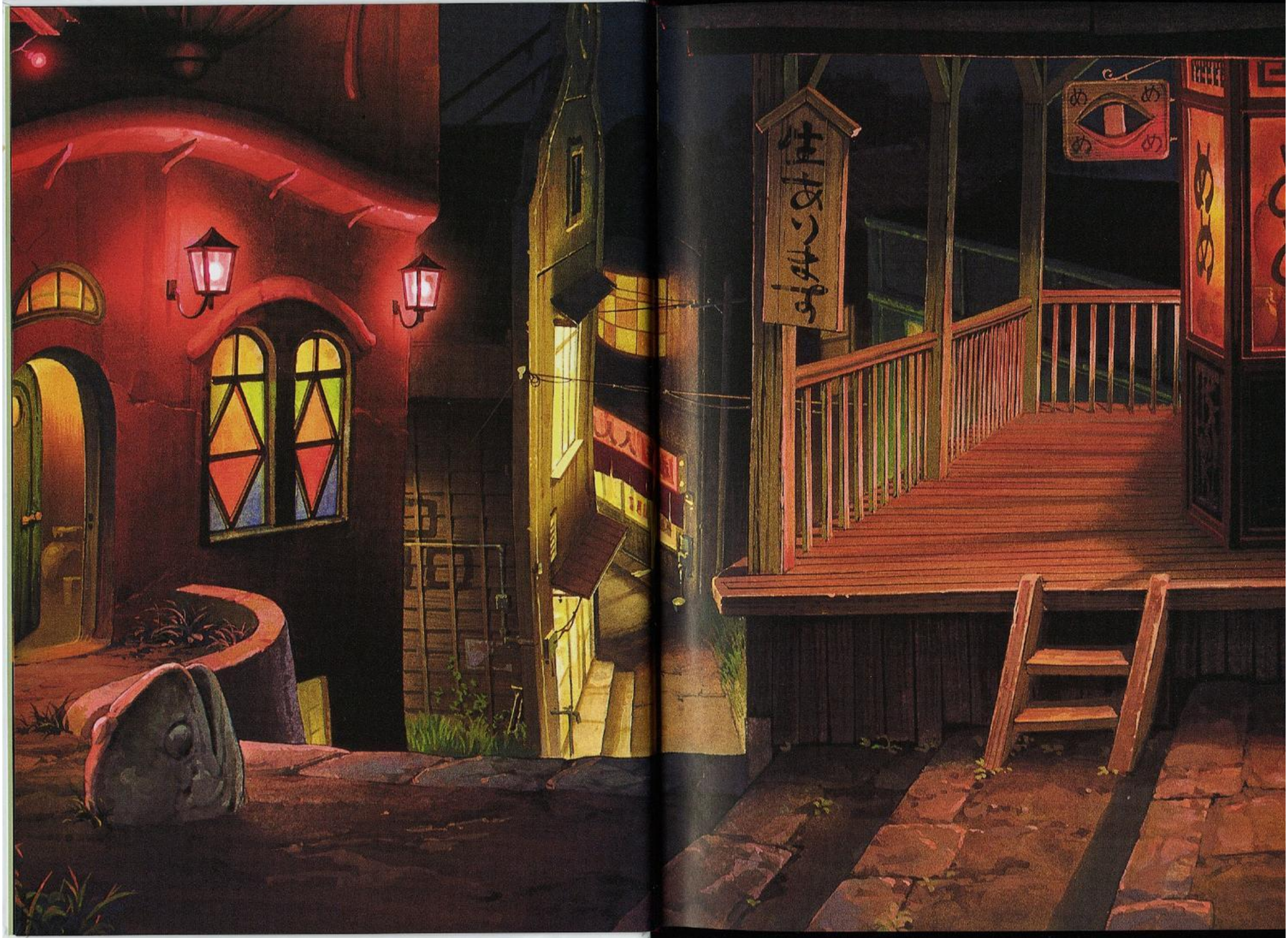

The Art Of Miyazaki's Spirited Away

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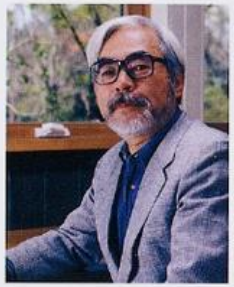
This book is a collection of concept sketches, background art, cel art, and digital data (still images) that tell the story of *Spirited Away*, an animated film conceived, scripted, and directed by Hayao Miyazaki. All concept sketches are by Hayao Miyazaki. Concept art is by Yoji Takeshige. Character designs are by supervising animator Masashi Ando. Note: scene images without captions were created from digital data.

Bath house entrance protected by the stone god (background) (p. 3). View with Clock Tower Shop (background) (pp. 4-5). Shops with signboards at night (background) (pp. 6-7). Bath house at night (background) (pp. 8-9). Interior of bath house (background) (pp. 10-11). Cover is from Hayao Miyazaki's concept sketch.

Concept sketch by Hayao Miyazaki. Chihiro with her parents, who have been transformed into pigs.

Chihiro's Mysterious Town

The Aim of this Film



by Hayao Miyazaki

Hayao Miyazaki was born 1941 in Tokyo. After receiving a degree in political science and economics from Gakushuin University, Miyazaki worked at Toei-Doga (currently Toei Animation) creating scene designs and original drawings for Little Norse Prince Valiant *(1968). Later, he moved to A Pro, where he was responsible for stories, screenplays, scene-settings, and key animation. In 1973, he, along with Isao Takahata and others, moved to Zuiyo Images. Miyazaki went on to work on scene design and scene organization for* Heidi *(1974) and to direct* Future Boy Conan *(1978) and* Lupin III: The Castle of Cagliostro *(1979).*

In 1985, after working for Nippon Animation and Telecom, Miyazaki became co-founder of Studio Ghibli. He wrote and directed the screenplay for Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind, *a film based on his original manga serialized in* Animage *magazine. Since then he has directed the animated feature films* Laputa: The Castle in the Sky *(1986),* My Neighbor Totoro *(1988),* Kiki's Delivery Service *(1989),* Porco Rosso *(1992), and* Princess Mononoke *(1997). He is the author of the books* The House Where Totoro Lives, Shuna's Journey, Mononoke Hime, *and* From This Point Forward.

I would say that this film is an adventure story even though there is no brandishing of weapons or battles involving supernatural powers. However, this story is not a showdown between right and wrong. It is a story in which the heroine will be thrown into a place where the good and the bad dwell together, and there, she will experience the world. She will learn about friendship and devotion, and will survive by making full use of her brain. She sees herself through the crisis, avoids danger and gets herself back to the ordinary world somehow. She manages not because she has destroyed the "evil," but because she has acquired the ability to survive.

The main theme of this film is to describe, in the form of a fantasy, some of the things in this world which have become vague, and the indistinct world which tends towards erosion and ruin.

In everyday life, where we are surrounded, protected, and kept out of danger's way, it is difficult to feel that we are working to survive in this world. Children can only enlarge their fragile egos. Chihiro's skinny legs and her sulky face are their symbols. However, once the reality becomes clear and once she encounters a crisis, she will surely be aware of the life she actually possesses and of a capacity for flexibility and patience, and for decisive judgement and action.

Most people just panic and collapse while shouting, "It can't be true." Those people will be erased or eaten up in the situation in which Chihiro finds herself. In fact, Chihiro's being strong enough not to be eaten up is just what makes her a heroine. She is a heroine not because she is beautiful or because she possesses a unique mind. This is the key characteristic of this work, and therefore it is a good story for ten-year-old girls.

Words are power. In the world Chihiro wandered into, words have a great importance and immutability. At "Yuya," where "Yubaba" rules, if Chihiro were to say, "I don't

want to do this," or "I want to go home," she would be eliminated by the sorceress. She would be made to wander about with nowhere to go until she vanishes or is made into a hen to lay eggs until she is eaten. On the contrary, if Chihiro says, "I will work here," even a sorceress can't ignore her. In these days, words are thought to be light and unimportant like bubbles, and no more than the reflection of a vacuous reality. It is still true that words can be powerful. The fact is, however, that powerless words are proliferating unnecessarily.

To take a name away from a person is an attempt to keep them under perfect control. Sen shuddered when she realized that she was beginning to forget her own name. And besides, every time she goes to see her parents at the pigpen, she becomes used to seeing her parents as pigs. In the world where Yubaba rules, people must always live among dangers which might swallow them up.

In a dangerous world, Chihiro began to come alive. The sulky and languid character will come to have a stunning and attractive facial expression by the end of the film. The nature of the world hasn't been changed in the least. I am arguing in this film that words are our will, ourselves and our power.

This is also the reason why I created a fantasy set in Japan. Though it is a fairy tale, I don't want to make it like a Western type of story which allows many possibilities for escape, and is likely to be taken as a cliché. However, I would prefer to say that it is rather a direct descendant of "Suzume no Oyado" (The Sparrows' Inn—a trap in which sparrows lure people by food and pleasant surroundings) or "Nezumi no Goten" (The Mouse's Castle—similar to "The Sparrows' Inn"), which appear in Japanese folk tales. Our ancestors had been dining at the Suzume no Oyado and enjoying a feast at the Nezumi no Goten.

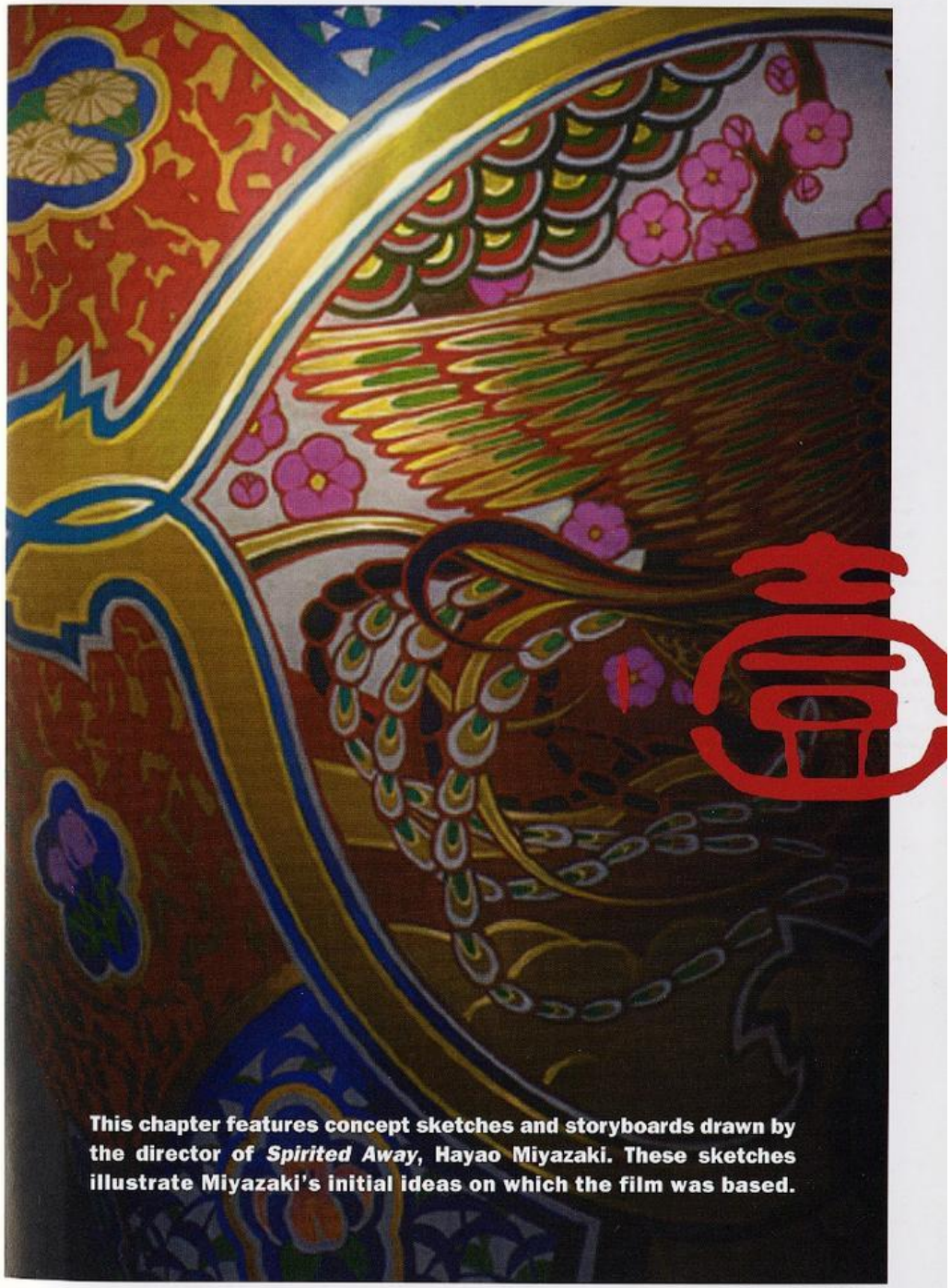
I created a world where Yubaba lives in pseudo-western style to make it seem as if it is something that has been seen somewhere else and to make it uncertain whether it is a dream or reality. And also, Japanese traditional design is a rich source for the imagination. We are often not aware of the rites, designs, and tales of the gods. It is true that "Kachi-kachi Yama" and "Momotaro" are no longer persuasive. However, I regret to say that it is a poor idea to push all the traditional things into a small folk-culture world. Surrounded by high technology and its flimsy devices, children are more and more losing their roots. We must inform them of the richness of our traditions.

I think the world of film can have a striking influence by fulfilling the traditional functions, as a piece of a vividly colored mosaic, to a story which can be applied today. That means, at the same time, we can gain a new understanding of what it means to be the residents of this island country.

In this borderless age, a man who doesn't have a place to put down his roots will be looked down upon. A place is the past and also a history. A man without history, or a people that forgot its past will have no choice but to disappear, like a shimmer of light or to lay eggs endlessly as a hen and consumed.

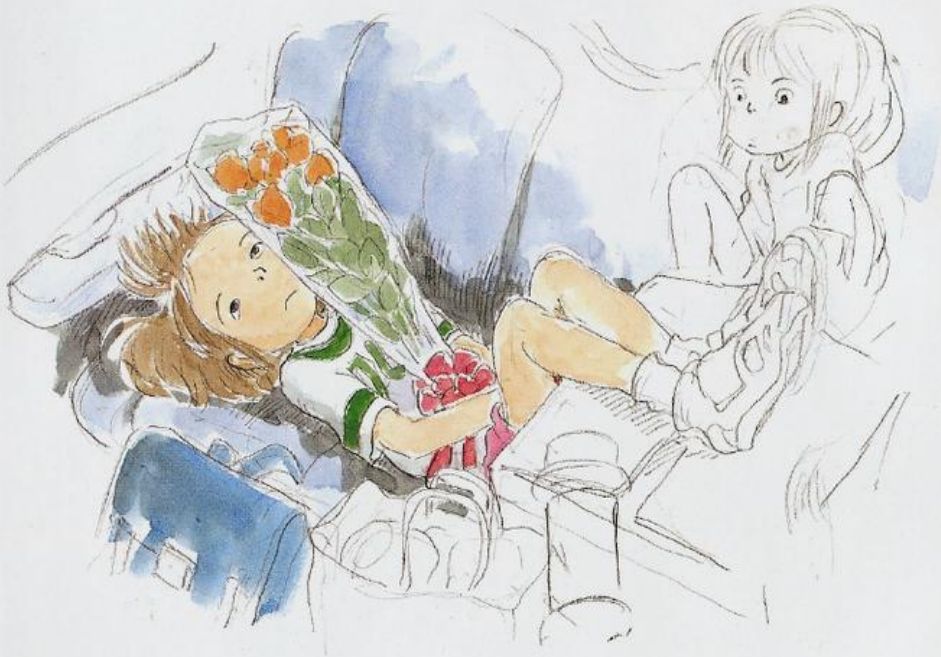
I would like to make this film something through which ten-year-old girls can encounter what it is that they truly want.

Concept sketch of Sen, Susuwatari, and Kasuga.



This chapter features concept sketches and storyboards drawn by the director of *Spirited Away*, Hayao Miyazaki. These sketches illustrate Miyazaki's initial ideas on which the film was based.

Background: Yubaba's vase



This page: Chihiro in the back seat while her family drives to their new home. She clutches a bouquet of flowers her classmates gave her as a going-away present.

Facing page (top): Sen/Chihiro and Lin serve a spirit at the bath house.
Facing page (bottom): Sen watches a dragon climb the sky.

This page: The inhabitants of the strange world Chihiro wanders into. Yubaba is the sorceress who runs a bath house for spirits. Baby is Yubaba's son. The human-headed crow is Yu-Bird. Kashira are a trio of disembodied heads who bounce around Yubaba.

Facing page (top): Contrast between Yubaba and her twin sister Zeniba.
Facing page (bottom): Contrast between Sen/Chihiro and Baby.

This page: The frog men who work at the bath house. They are cooks, watchers, and barkers. Haku (upper left) is a boy who became Yubaba's apprentice.

Facing page: Yuna, female workers at the bath house. They serve the spirits.

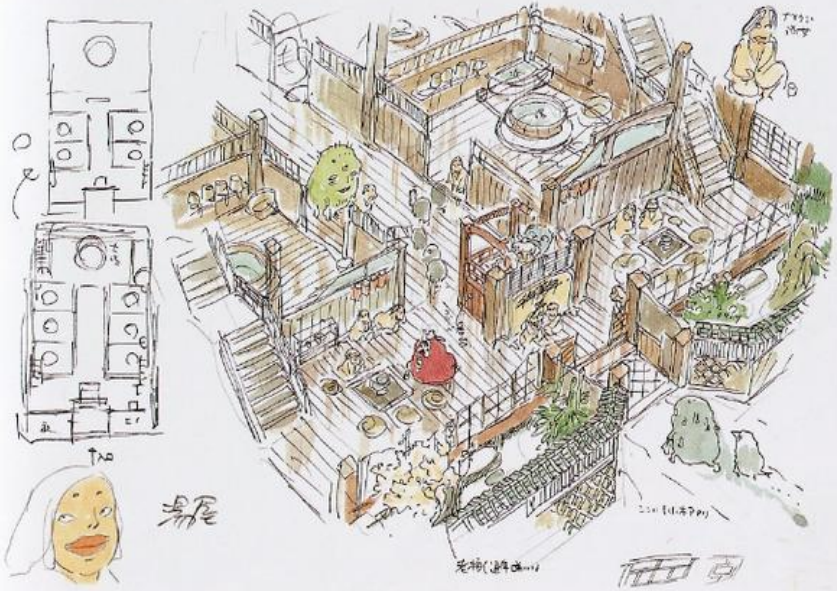
Spirits visiting the bath house. In addition to these spirits created by Miyazaki, other spirits designed by members of the animation staff also appear in the film.

Facing page, this page (top): The entrance to the bath house deep inside the forest Chihiro and her parents stray into.

This page (bottom left): Building interior resembling a church space or the waiting room of a train station. Chihiro's family enters the other world through this location.
This page (bottom right): The stone spirits who protect the entrance.

This page (top): The clock tower. It is the gateway between this world and the other world.
This page (middle, bottom): The train station at the bottom of the bath house. Freight trains deliver coal for the boiler.

Facing page: A complete view of the bath house. The lowest level consists of the boiler room. The workers' dorms are located above the boiler room. The middle level consists of the bathing quarters and leisure rooms for spirits. The top level consists of Yubaba's office and living quarters.

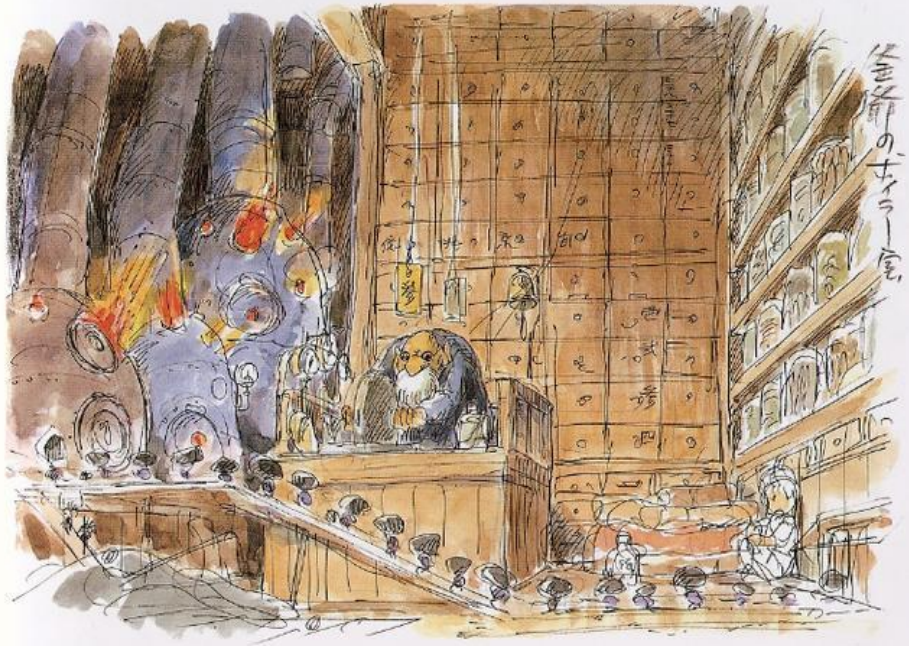


This page: A view of the bath house seen from the entrance.

Facing page (top): Cross-section of the bath house.
Facing page (bottom): Bath house interior depicting the spatial relationship between the bathing quarters and the entrance.

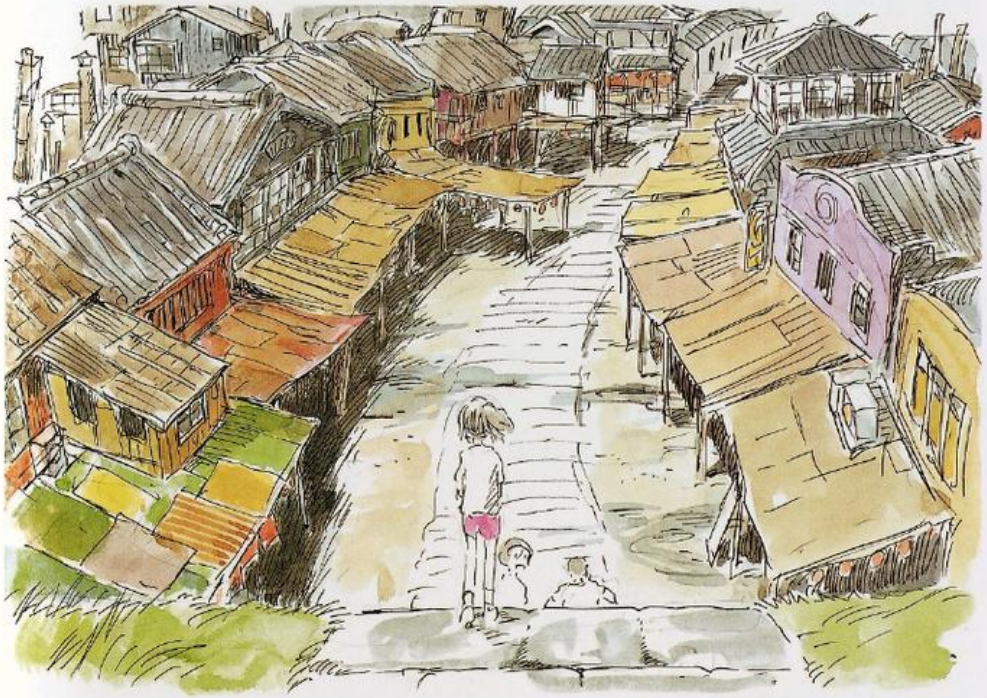
This page (top): Rough sketch of the bath house and spirits arriving by tour bus.
This page (bottom): Bath house interior viewed from the bathing quarters.

Facing page: Kamaji's boiler room located in the bath house basement. Drawers filled with herbs are located in the back. With each order, he makes medicinal herbs by mixing herbs selected from various drawers. Created from soot, Susuwatari are assigned to carry coal.



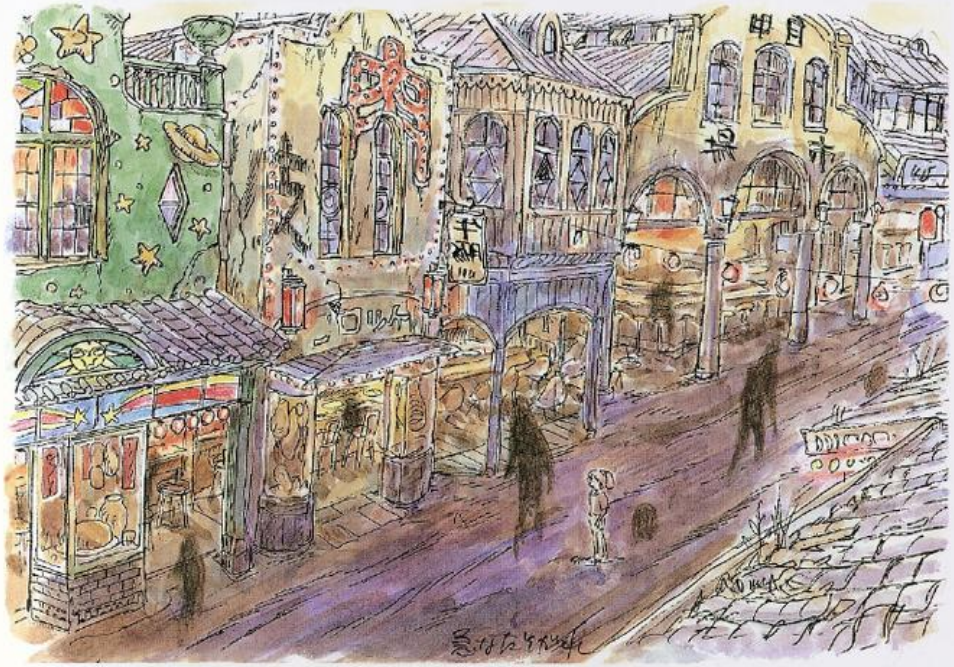
Facing page (top): Bath house interior, watch-stand area. Yubaba gives orders from the watch-stand.
Facing page (bottom): On her first day of work at the bath house, Sen/Chihiro gazes out from the hall of the women's quarters.

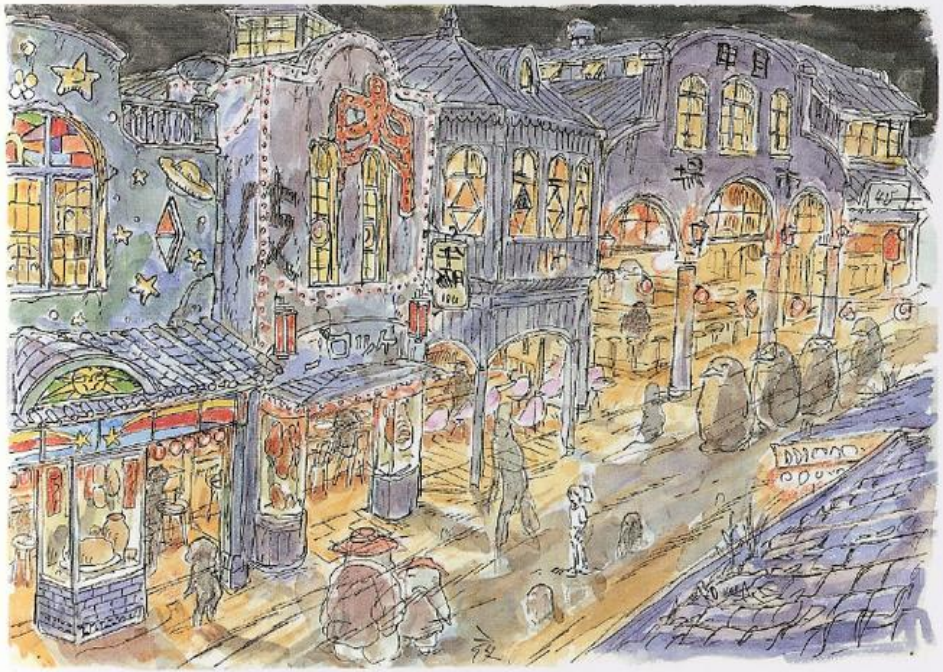
This page: Chasing after her parents, Chihiro finds herself in the deserted town. This occurs at the beginning of the film.



This page, facing page (top): At dusk the stores light up and mysterious entities pass through them.

Facing page: Then at night the whole street turns into an entertainment quarter.





Storyboards depicting an early scene where Chihiro's parents recklessly eat the food left out at a stand. The boards illustrate the key scene and provide a general sequence.

Continuation of the storyboard sequence. Leaving her food-fixated parents behind, Chihiro wanders into the town, where she encounters a boy named Haku in front of the bath house. Night falls quickly, and Chihiro returns to the restaurant only to find...

...her parents, mysteriously transformed into pigs. Terrified, Chihiro runs away, but discovers the clock tower they had entered is now across the sea on the distant horizon. Having lost her way, Chihiro becomes despondent.

いちばん 汚くくさいお客さん

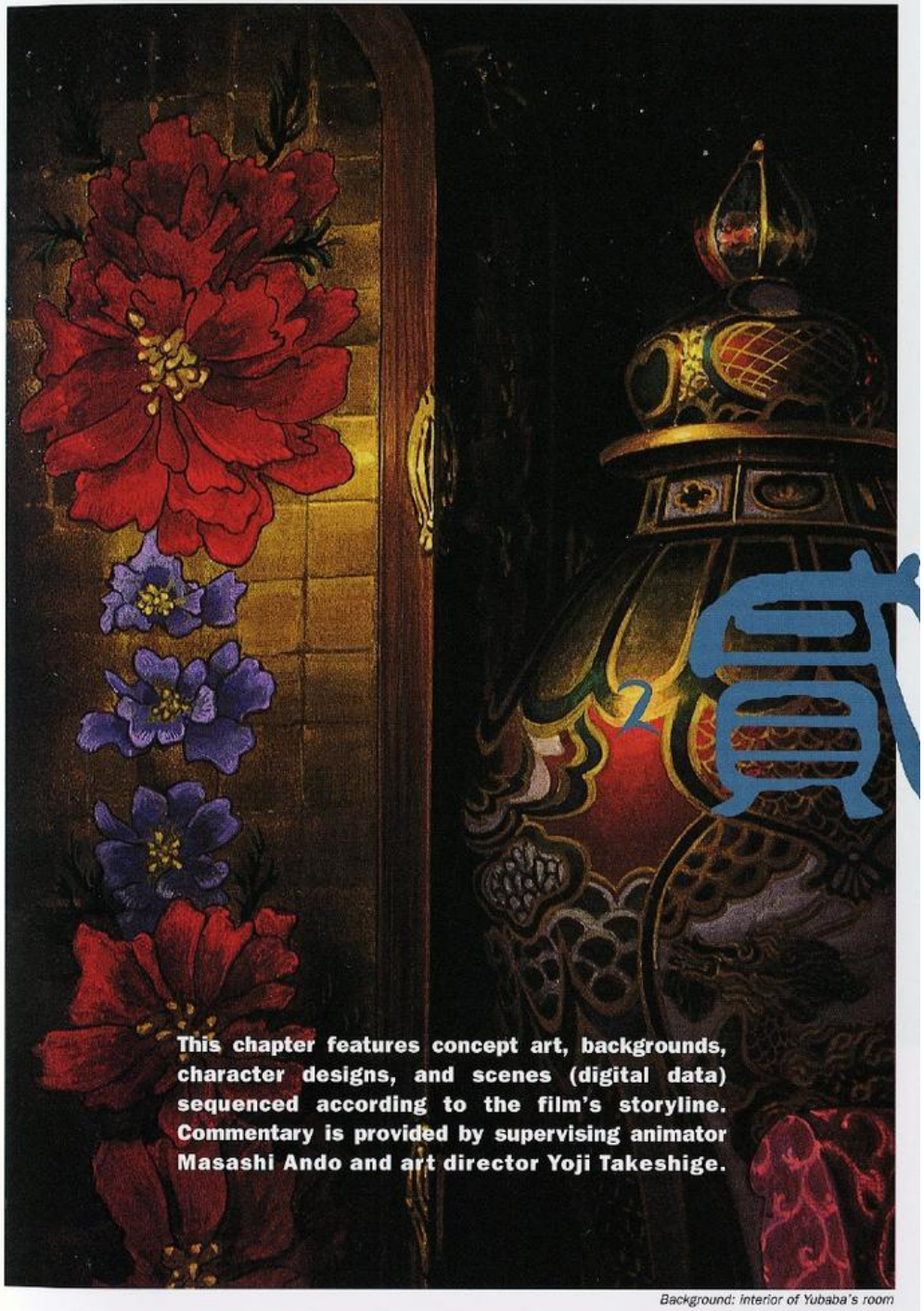
お金あります

ナメクジ 湯せにげる

Preceding pages, this page: Storyboards illustrating the bath house frenzy when the reeking Stink Spirit arrives. The putrid spirit turns out to be a river spirit with an old man's face. In return, the spirit gives Sen/Chihiro a dumpling that will lift curses.

Concept sketches for No Face, who plays an important role in the film. Because these are initial designs, they differ somewhat from the character in the final film.

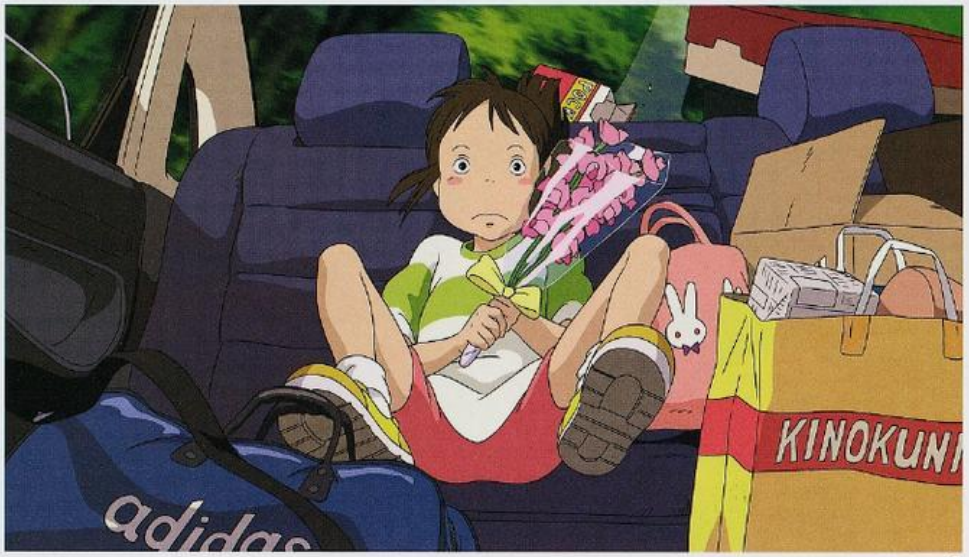
Concept sketches for the ending of the film. The background drawings based on these concept sketches were digitally processed for the film.



This chapter features concept art, backgrounds, character designs, and scenes (digital data) sequenced according to the film's storyline. Commentary is provided by supervising animator Masashi Ando and art director Yoji Takeshige.

Background: Interior of Yubaba's room

Ten-year-old Chihiro Ogino is an only child who's a little spoiled. On the way to their new house, she and her parents wander onto a small road which leads them down a mysterious tunnel. After exiting the tunnel, they wander into a strange town. There she finds a bath house spirits visit to rest and heal themselves. As she wanders around the town she encounters a mysterious boy who cautions her to leave before nightfall. But cursed for eating the town's food, her parents are turned into pigs...



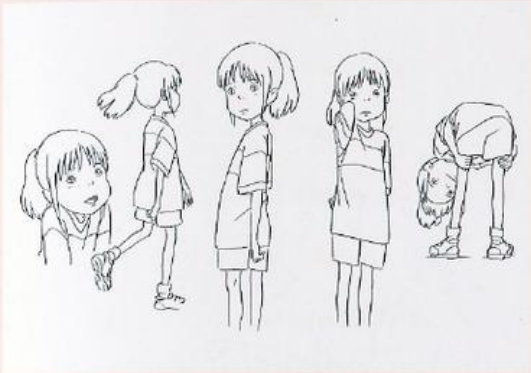
1

Chihiro Ogino

2

3

1-3: The film's heroine. A ten-year-old girl. Unhappy about her family moving to a new place, she sulks, but then...
4-6: Pose illustrations evoking the gestures of a ten-year-old girl. (character designs)



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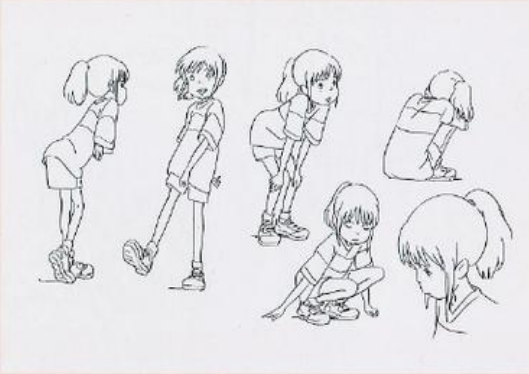
"The work I did as supervising animator was essentially the same as my work on *Princess Mononoke*. Mr. Miyazaki would do rough corrections of the submitted key animation, which I would then touch up. However, I was responsible for the final overall character design. For example, Mr. Miyazaki would constantly flatten Lin's chest line, making her look boyish. Given her masculine personality, I thought it would be more interesting if she had a woman's body, so I increased her chest line. So this time I emphasized my own approach instead of seeking out Mr. Miyazaki's intentions." (Ando)



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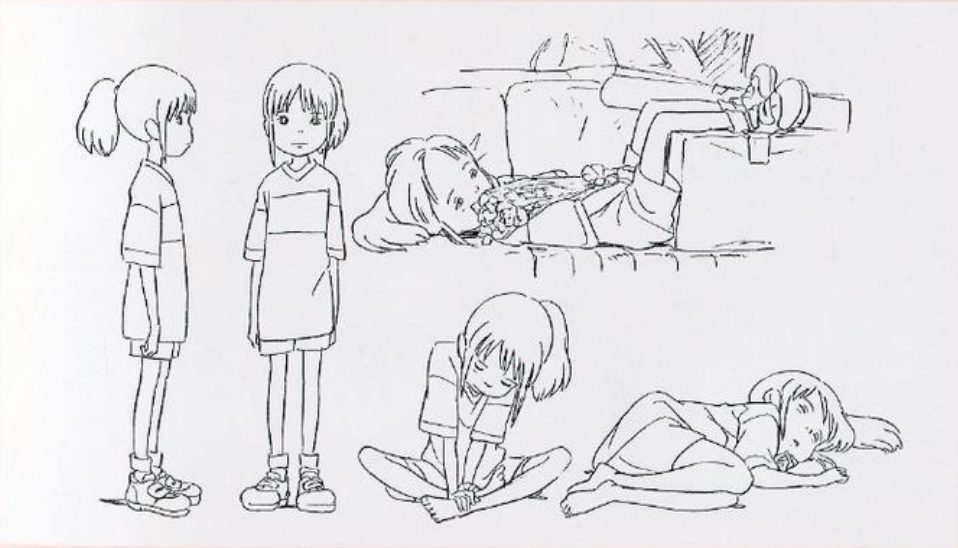

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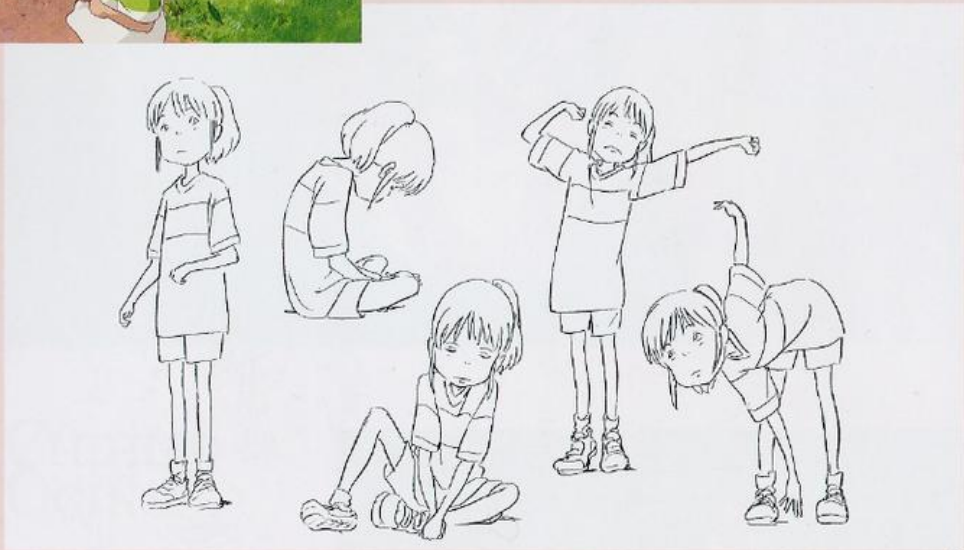

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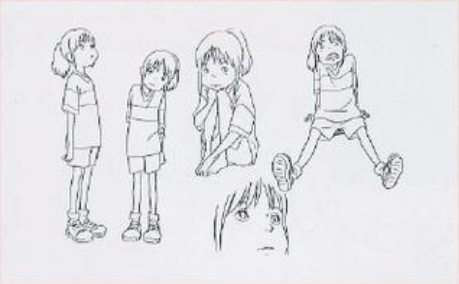

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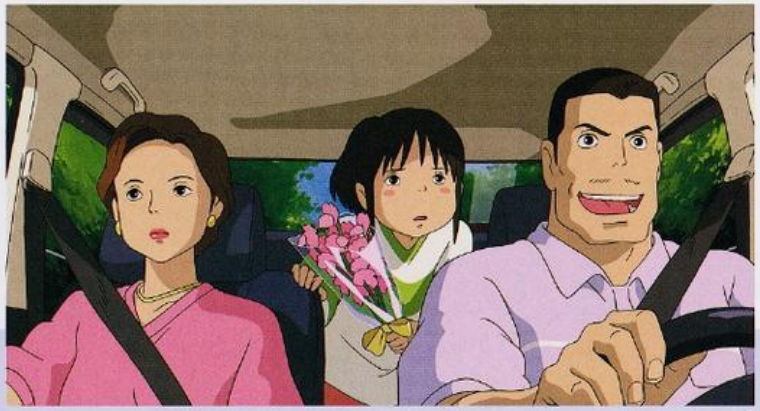
7

1: After exiting the mysterious tunnel with her parents, Chihiro is terrified by the sight of the clock tower.
2-9: Pose illustrations of Chihiro's gestures. (character designs)

8

9

"Chihiro's character wasn't based on a particular model. Apparently, Mr. Miyazaki had his producer-friend's daughter in mind, but by the time I was shown her photo, my work was already underway and I thought, 'Well, she doesn't resemble her at all. Her body's thin.' But Mr. Miyazaki originally requested a pudgy girl, so that's why her face ended up being round. Although I made her body thin, I made sure her head and body weren't out of proportion." (Ando)



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Akio Ogino

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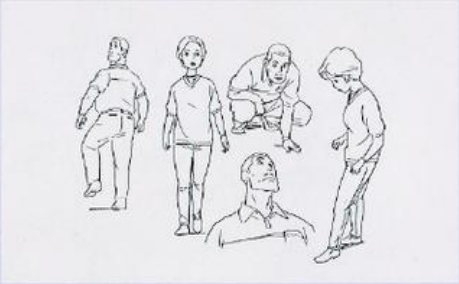


5

"Just like Chihiro, her father is based on no one in particular. At first I modeled him after Mr. Miyazaki's producer-friend, so I drew him with a fat figure, but that made him look too old. Furthermore, he was to have an insatiable appetite, so in the end I drew him as a jock who's both audacious as well as irresponsible. This personality isn't so common in Mr. Miyazaki's films, which tend to have more brainy characters." (Ando)

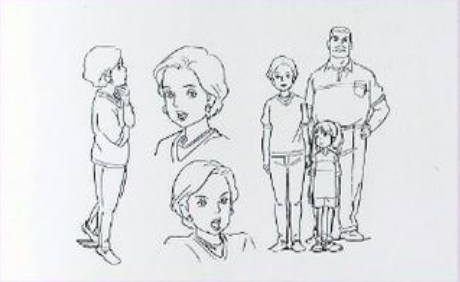
1: In the film he is only referred to as Chihiro's father. He is 38 years old. He is overly confident and optimistic.
2-5: Pose illustrations depicting her parents' interaction with Chihiro. (character designs)

6-9: Just like her husband, this character is only referred to as Chihiro's mother. (character designs)
10: She is 35 years old. She is realistic and assertive, an equal to her husband.

"The mother too is unprecedented in Mr. Miyazaki's films. She is a no-nonsense, contemporary woman. Mother characters depicted in Mr. Miyazaki's films tend to be nurturing and kind, but Yuko is the opposite type. She wears earrings and lipstick. Originally Mr. Miyazaki illustrated the mother with permed hair, wearing gaudy makeup. I thought that made her look too middle-aged, so I gave her a more cool image." (Ando)

6

8



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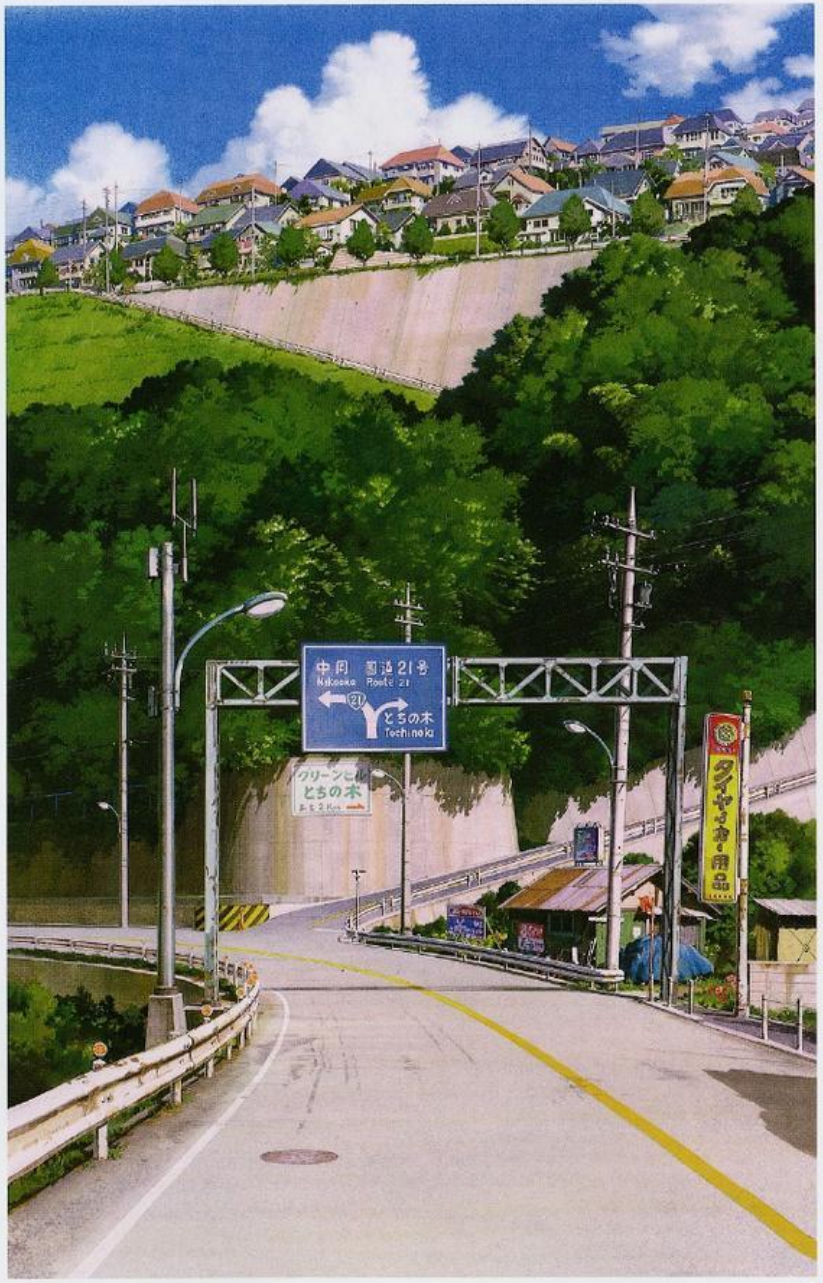
Yuko Ogino

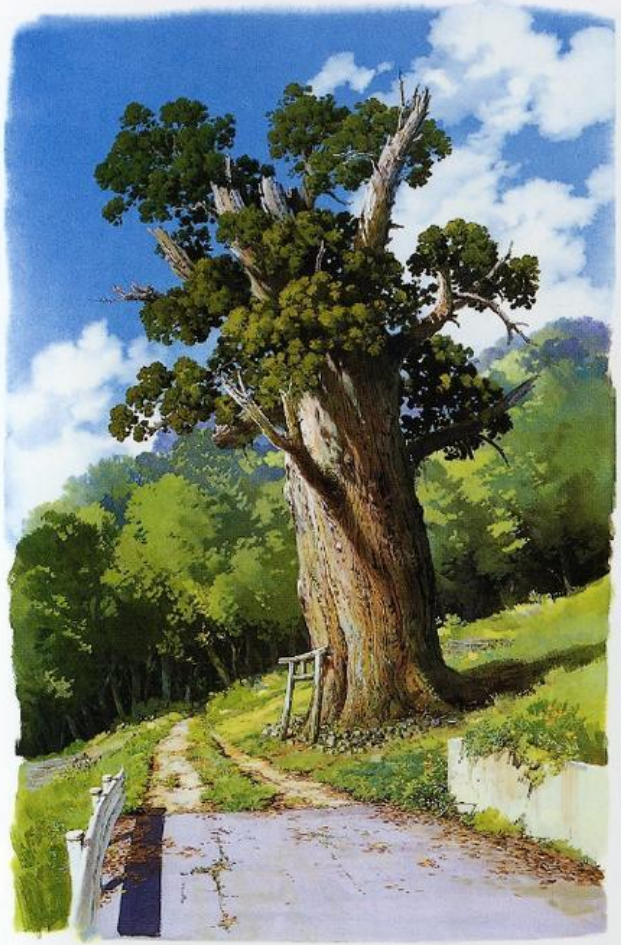
10



1

1: View on the way to their new house. Note the residential development on the quarried mountain peak. (background)
2-3: Ancient tree towering under the blue sky. Stone shrines and an old Shinto gateway are scattered around its trunk. (background)

WAY TO WOODS



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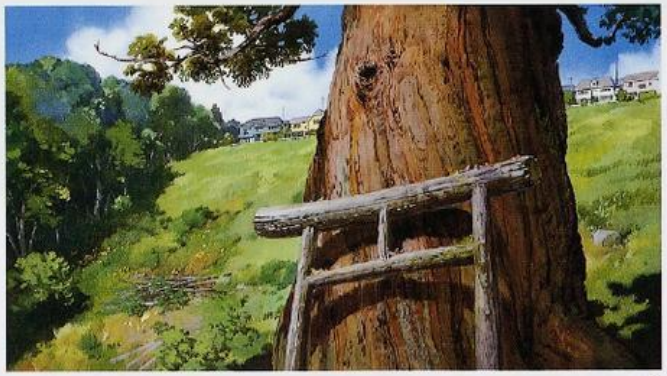

3

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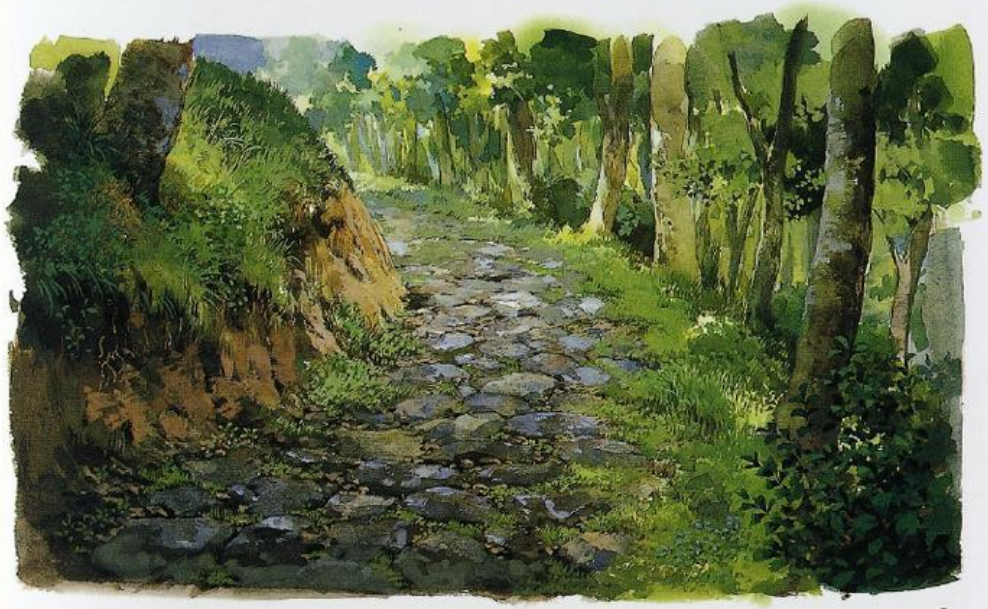
1: The road inside the forest that Chihiro's family wanders into. (background)
2-3: Chihiro's family enters the deep forest. The road turns to stone pavement. (art boards)



3

Between the real world and alternate world

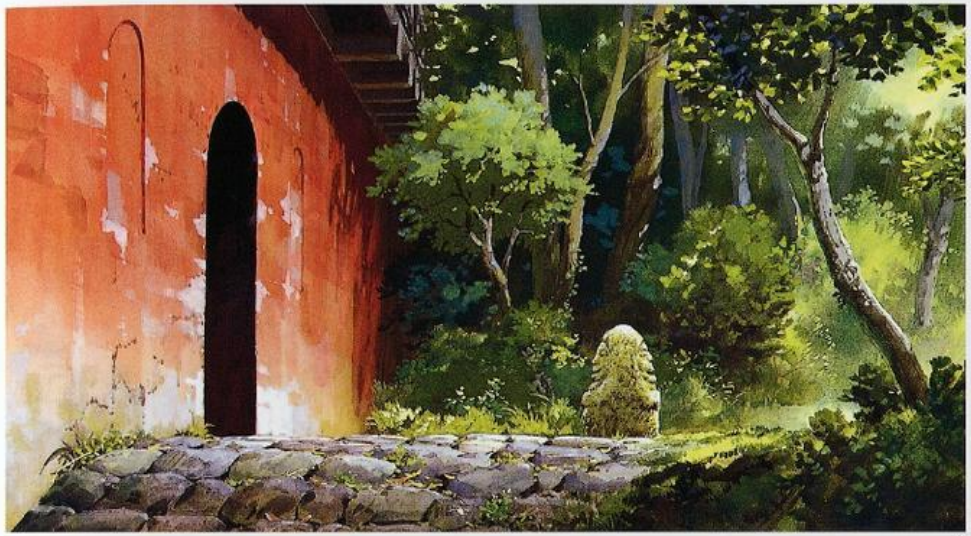
"The art design is based on the director's sketches and storyboards as well as subsequent layouts drawings by the director. Following this work, I incorporated color textures and lighting and drew all the concept art, including samples for the staff. The background drawings were divided up between a dozen of our staff painters. I requested Kazuo Oga* (see editorial note, below) for the opening forest sequence. Mr. Oga is an expert in drawing Japanese landscapes and natural settings and because his painting style differs from mine, I thought this would provide a nice contrast between the real world and the alternate world. The bean field landscapes that appear during the family's move, and the CG processed rhododendron material came from Mr. Oga's paintings. Even though they look simple, there's plenty of information there. I was amazed how real it could look after the CG processing.

"One difficulty I encountered was depicting old Japanese houses, which are very prominent in this film. The roofs and houses were supposed to be somewhat lopsided. The director's layout had this kind of atmosphere, so I tried my best to add perspective without making them look unnatural. But then they could end up looking really lopsided, so I came up with a tricky technique that would make them look natural." (Takeshige)

**Editorial Note: Kazuo Oga was the art director for the Studio Ghibli films* My Neighbor Totoro *and* Pompoko.

1

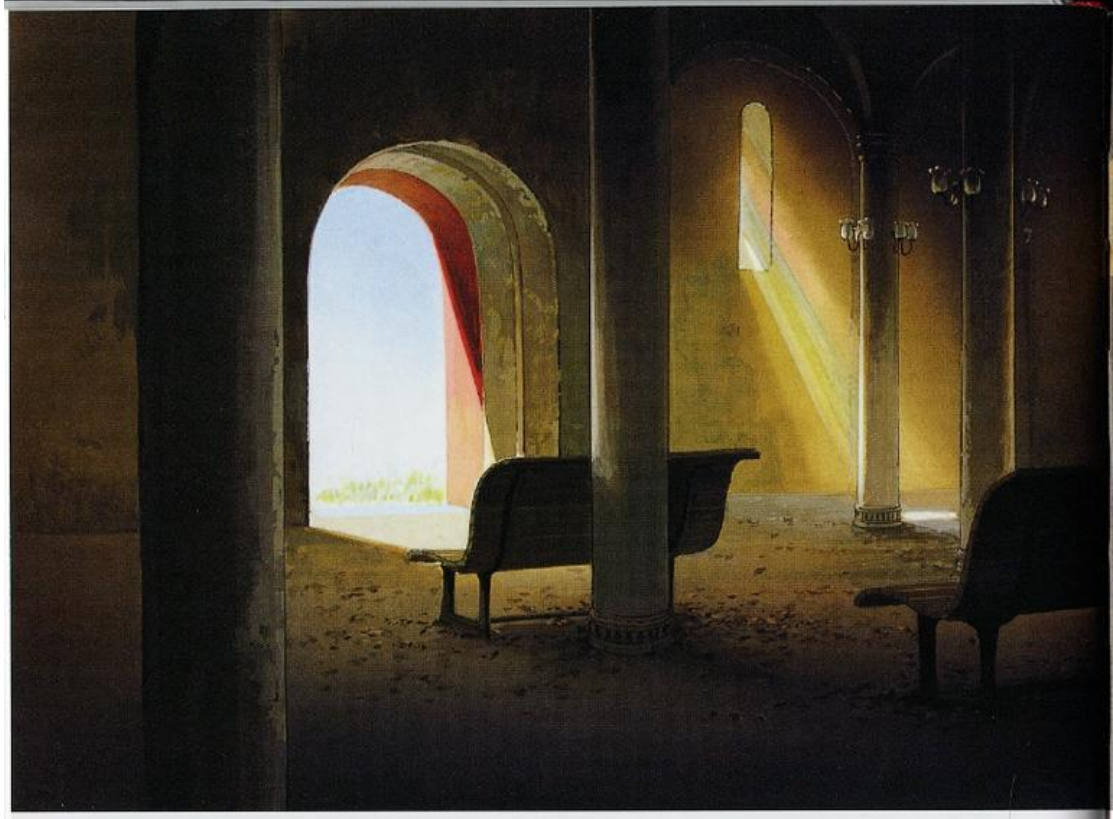
The Tunnel Of The Stone Spirit

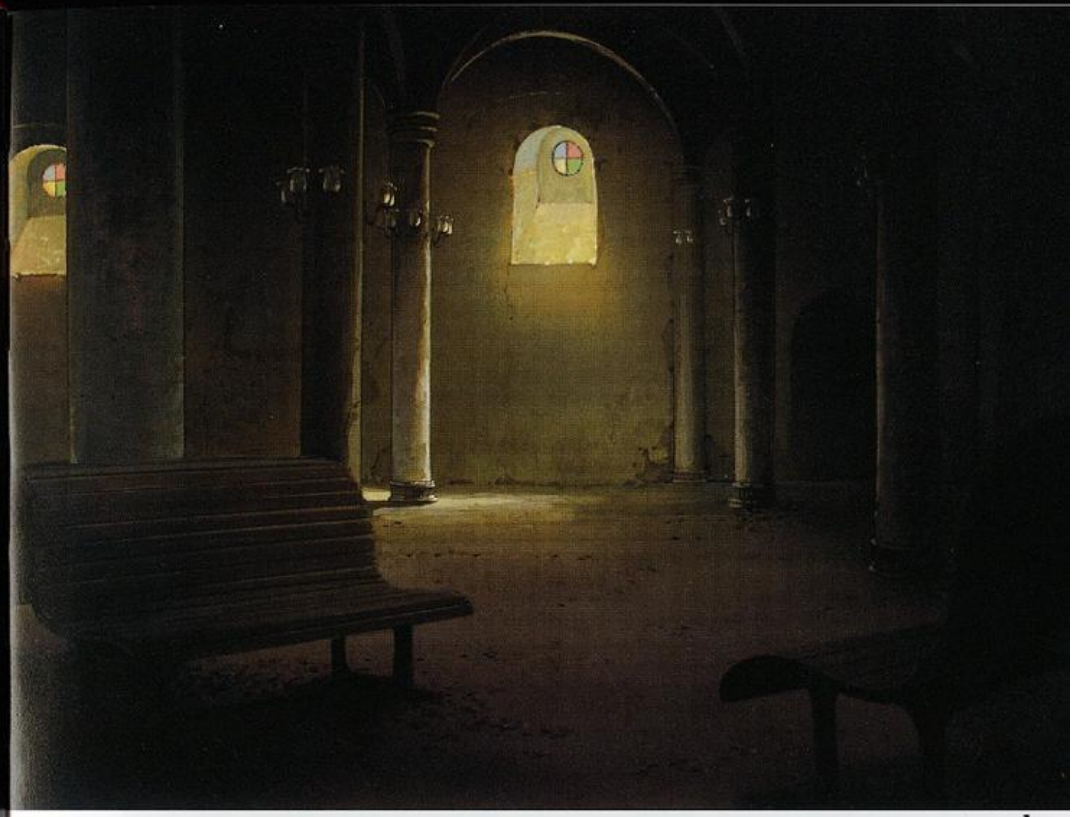


2

3

1: Chihiro's family's car abruptly stops at the big red building. The entrance is protected by a stone spirit. (concept art)
2-3: Stone spirit protecting the entrance. Covered with moss, the spirit is double-faced. (background)





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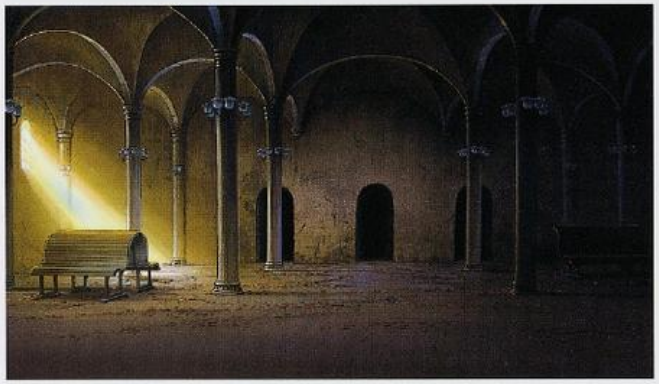
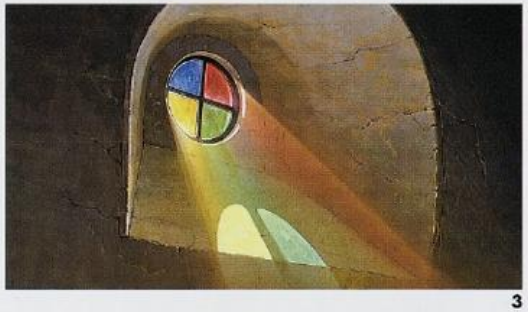


2

1-2: The wide open space inside the tunnel Chihiro's family enters. (background)
3-4: The building resembles an abandoned train station. A bright ray of sun pours in through the stained glass window. (background)



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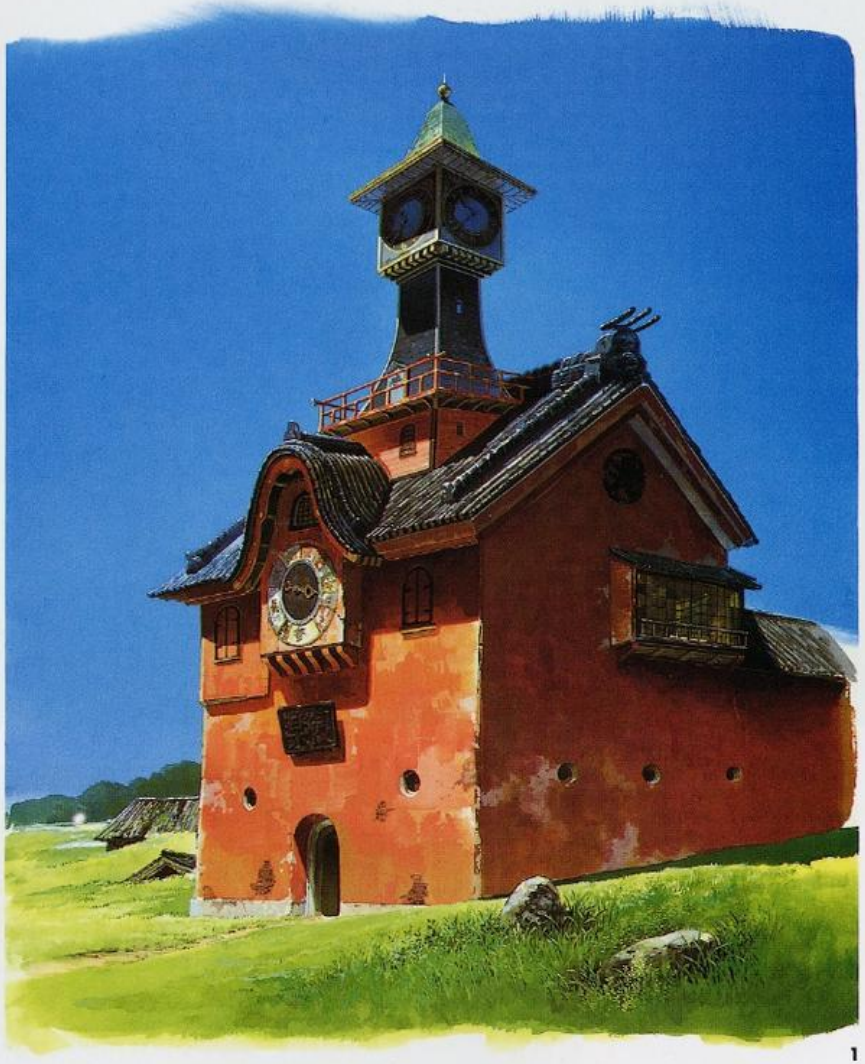

1

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3

1: The strange clock tower under the blue sky. A vermilion-red building designed in the Kawagoe-warehouse style. (background)
2: Clock tower seen from below. (background)
3: Plains covered with summer grass. White clouds drifting by. (concept art)
4-5: Stone stairs with garden lantern, as if located on a river bank. Her parents rush up the stairs. (backgrounds)

4

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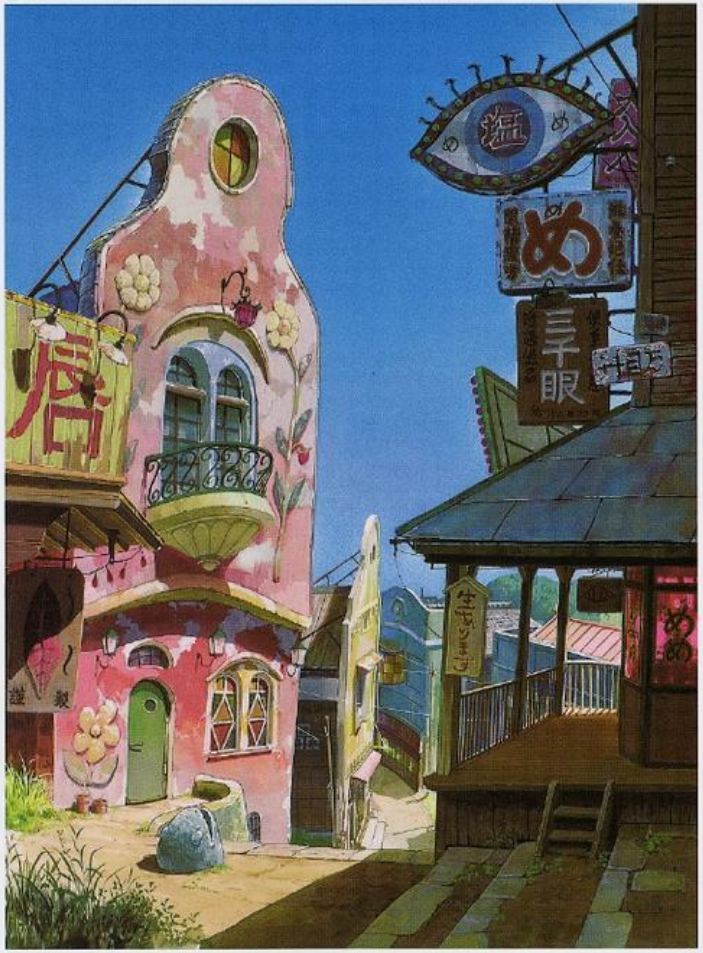

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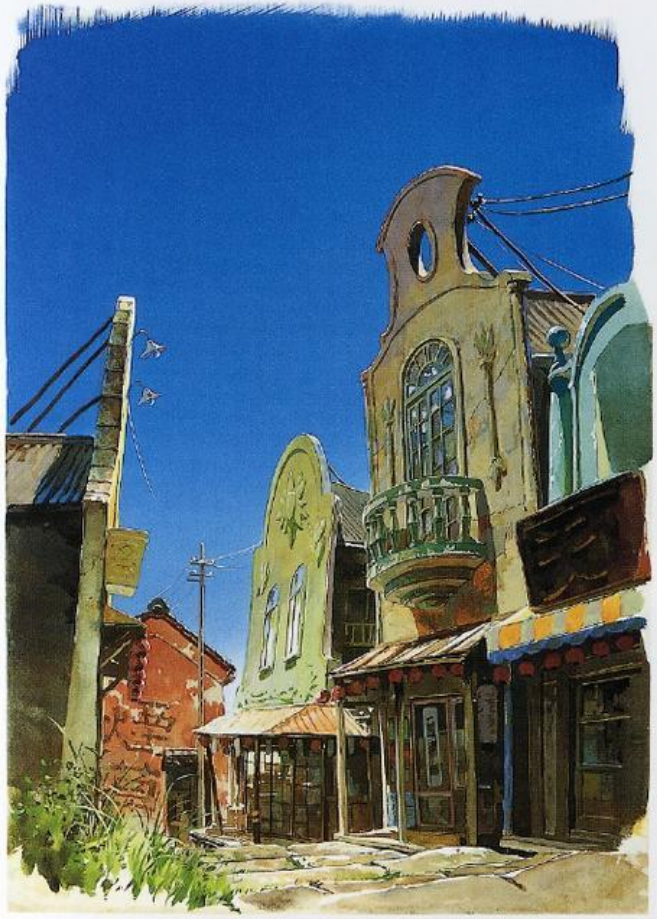
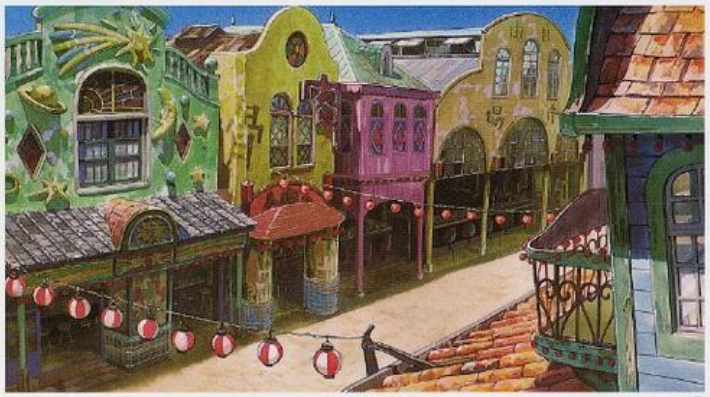


4

The Strange Restaurant District

1-4: The signboard architecture becomes visible as they climb the stone stairs. The buildings are awkwardly lopsided. (concept art, background)
5: Flashy restaurant district in what appears to be the center of town.



5

1-3: The restaurant district, bathed in afternoon sunlight. The shops all have counters. (concept art, backgrounds)
4-5: The restaurant district at night, illuminated by incandescent light bulbs.
6: Stairs in the afternoon. They are Japanese-style, an arcade of fancy restaurants. (concept art)

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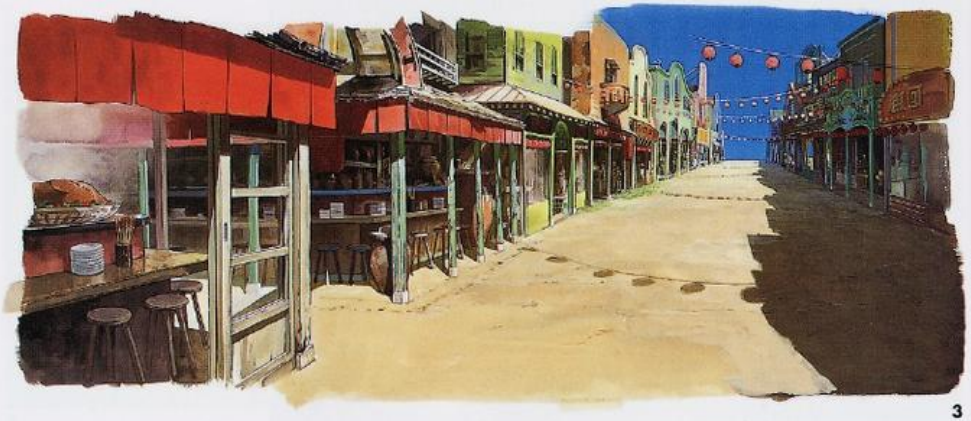
2



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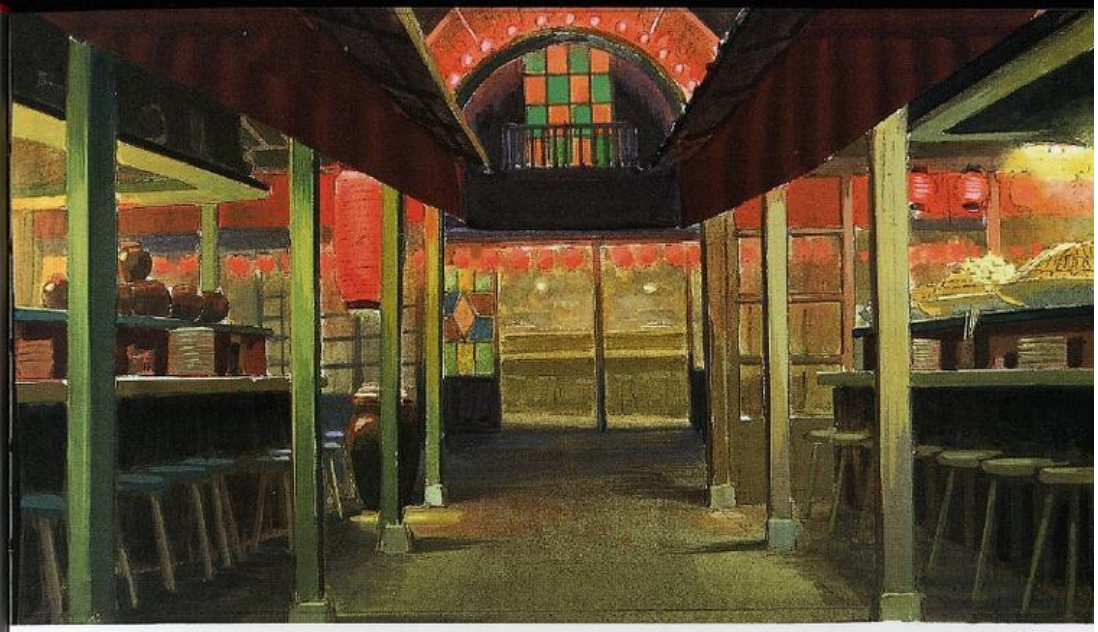

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1

Color design based on red

"The bath house interiors are lit up with incandescent light bulbs, so the lighting has a reddish tinge. But because this type of place is so rare these days, if we weren't careful, the lighting would end up becoming a familiar fluorescent white. So I paid close attention to the colors. Also, because I was trained in oil painting, my colors tend to be somber, so at the board stage the director requested the colors be 'more gaudy with the red almost blinding.' The reds were emphasized throughout the film, including the background drawings of the clock towers, the bath house walls, the hanging lanterns in the restaurant district, and the bridge railing. So I came up with the color design and assignments based on this red, which we might refer to as the film's 'theme color.'

"Also, unaltered match poster colors were used in some parts of this film. Unblended straight colors have rarely been used in previous Ghibli films, but since we were really going for red in this film, we decided to paint with pure red paint. There's a flashy gold in certain locations, such as the bath house interior and Yubaba's room. We used shades of yellow paint for this color. We would then touch it up with highlighting (reflection) or adding orange, and by reducing the surrounding colors, the color shined like gold. This was an effective technique." (Takeshige)

2

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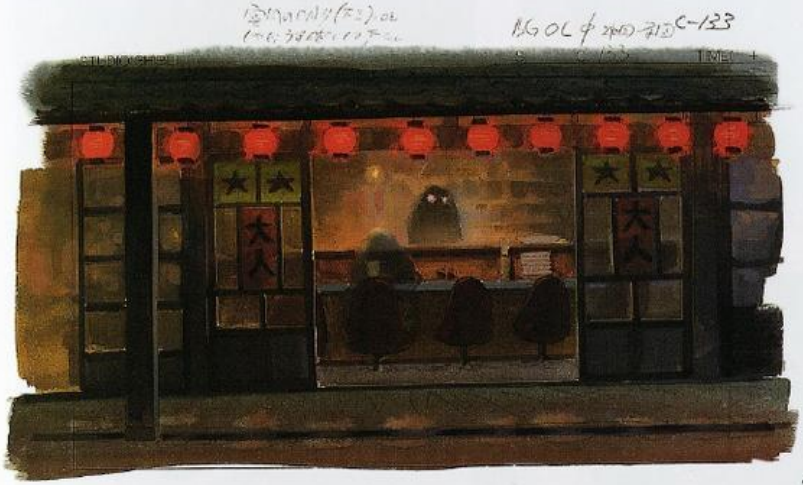
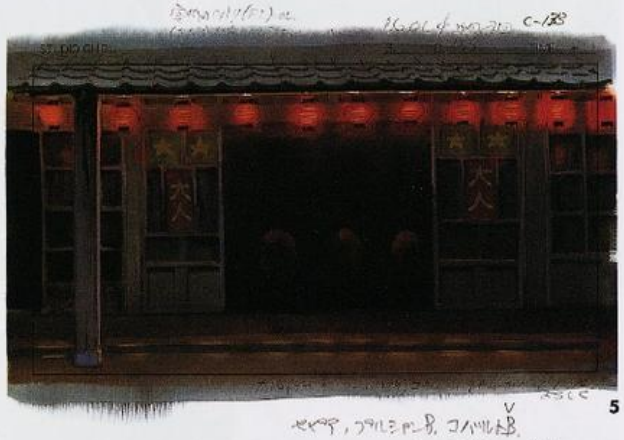


4

1-6: Variations of the shadows drifting through the restaurants.



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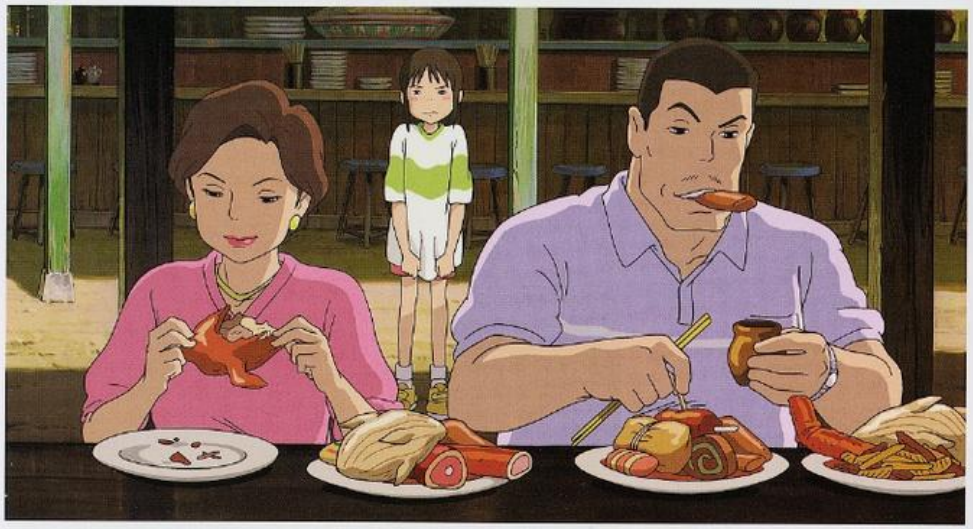

3

5

4

Parents Turn Into Pigs

1-4: Enticed by the aroma, Chihiro's parents enter a restaurant and gorge themselves on the food there. 5-9: As a result of eating the food, the parents turn into pigs. (character designs)

6

7

8

9

1

The Bath House

1-3: The gigantic bath house soaring above the vermilion-red bridge, bathed in the west sunlight. The chimney emits black smoke while steam rises on the right. (concept art, background)
4, 7: The murky bottom of the gorge is a marsh immersed in what appears to be sludge. Occasionally, a two-car train emerges from the tunnel with a roaring sound. (concept art)
5: Giant vermilion-red garden lantern.
6: The bridge is supported by a steel frame.

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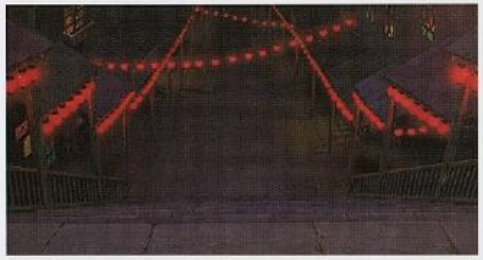

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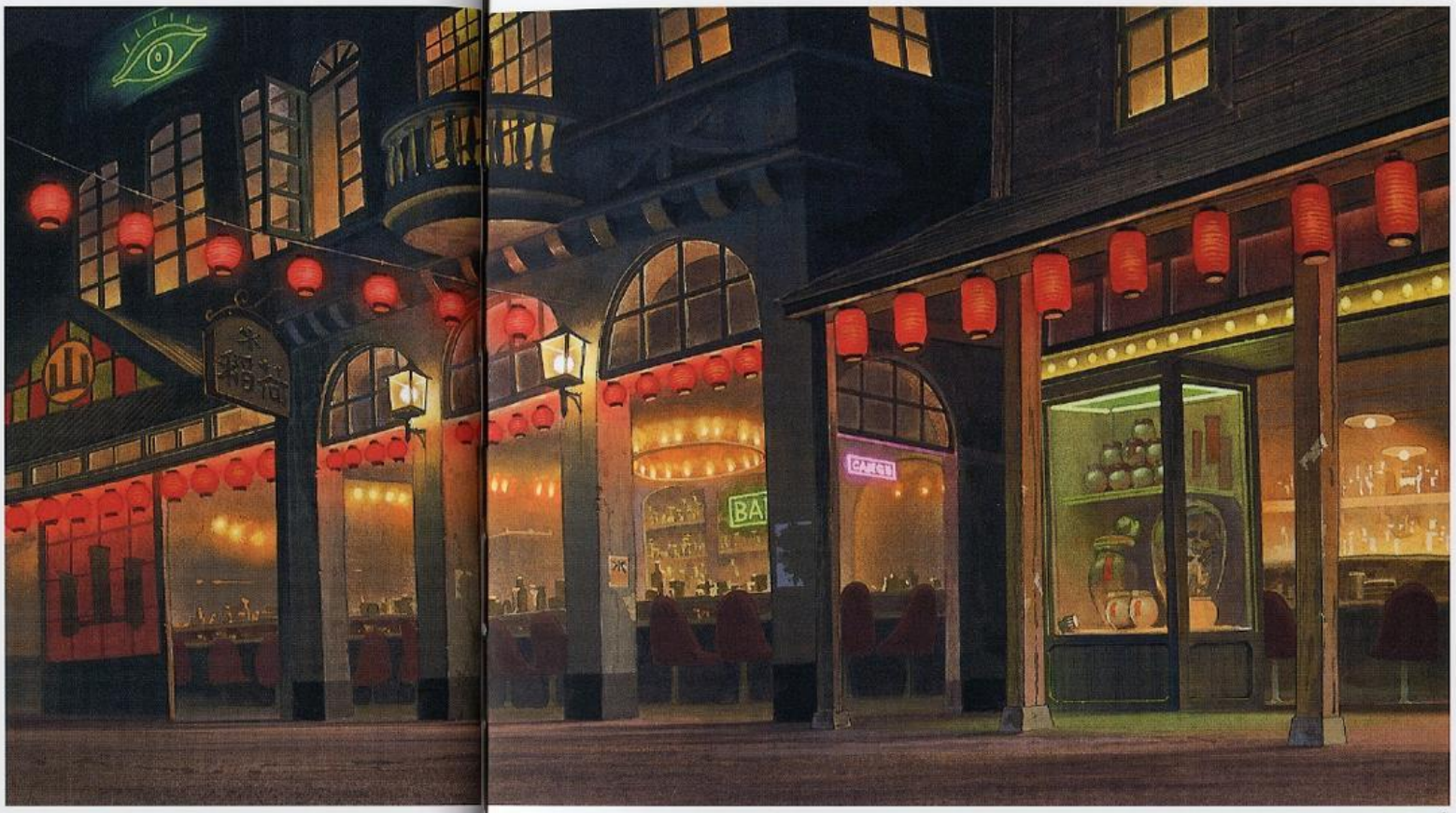


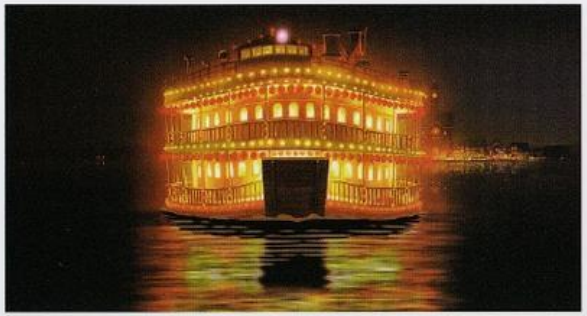
6

Dusk

7

8

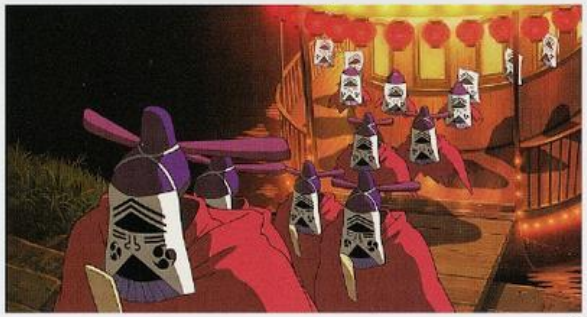
1-5: As the area darkens, the bath house entrance (1) and the giant garden lantern (2) are lit. 6-8: The hanging lanterns light up the restaurant district and alleys. (backgrounds)



1

Harbor

2



3

4

1-2: With a brilliant glow, the ferry approaches and docks at the river bank. (concept art)
3: Kasuga spirits depart from the ferry.
4: River bank at night. The frog gargolye emerges from the soil at noon. (background)
5: Behind the entertainment quarters. Rows of barracks. The lights from the entertainment quarters shine above the roofs. (background)

5